

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

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R 271519Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8360

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5878

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS: REASSURANCES
OF UNITY

REFS: (A) LISBON 5779 (DTG 241510Z AUG 76), (B) LISBON
5845 (DTG 261727Z AUG 76), (C) LISBON 5534 (DTG
131554Z AUG 76)

SUMMARY: THE ARMY STAFF, THE NORTHERN MILITARY REGION,
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL SPOKESMAN SOUSA E CASTRO, AND MELO
ANTUNES MADE STATEMENTS DESIGNED TO SHOW THE PUBLIC
THAT THERE WAS NO DISPUTE BETWEEN THE NORTHERN REGION AND
THE ARMY STAFF OR THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. THESE STATE-
MENTS DID NOT DENY THAT THERE HAD BEEN DIFFERENCES OF
OPINION OVER WHO WOULD REPLACE PIRES VELOSO ON THE REVOLUTIONARY
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COUNCIL, AND DEMONSTRATED THAT COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE SENSITIVE TO

THE WIDELY CIRCULATING CRITICISM THAT THEIR SQUABBLING IS
DETRIMENTAL TO POLITICAL STABILITY IN PORTUGAL. END SUMMARY.

1. ARMY STAFF REASSURES NORTH: THE ARMY STAFF AUGUST 26
STATED:

- CONTRADICTORY NEWS REPORTS COULD CAUSE UNFOUNDED
SPECULATION REGARDING INTERNAL ARMY MATTERS.
- SOME BASELESS REPORTS CLAIMED THAT THE AUGUST 20
NORTHERN MILITARY REGION (RMN) MEETING CONSTITUTED A
FORM OF PRESSURE ON ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF DECISIONS AND
INSINUATED THE EXISTENCE OF LINKS BETWEEN THE RMN AND
COMMITTEES FOR THE DEFENSE OF LIBERTY (CDL).
- THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF HAS FULL CONFIDENCE IN THE
RMN, WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEHAVED IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH
THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION AND THE ARMY.

2. RMN DENIES DISSENSION: THE RMN STATED AUGUST 26:

- THE AUGUST 20 RMN MEETING HAD RECOMMENDED THAT PIRES
VELOSO'S REPLACEMENT ON THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC)
BE AN OFFICER LINKED TO THE RMN AND FAMILIAR WITH NORTHERN
PROBLEMS. GARCIA DOS SANTOS WAS NEVER MENTIONED OR
OPPOSED AT THE AUGUST 20 MEETING.
- RMN SPOKESMAN NEVER EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR BG
CARLOS AZEREDO TO THE MEDIA.
- THE RMN REPUDIATES THE FALSE ACCUSATION REGARDING
RMN LINKS WITH THE CDL.

3. MELO ATUNES AND SOUSA CASTRO CALM THE WATERS:

SOUSA E CASTRO IN AUGUST 27 -EXPRESSO" INTERVIEW
EXPRESSED REGRETS FOR ANY PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL OFFENSE
WHICH HIS REMARKS MIGHT HAVE CAUSED (REF A). SOUSA E
CASTRO STATED THAT HE HAD ALREADY TELEPHONED PIRES VELOSO
TO CLEAR UP ANY MISUNDERSTANDING. MELO ANTUNES AUGUST
26 CALLED ON PIRES VELOSO IN HIS OPORTO HOSPITAL ROOM.
ANTUNES TOLD THE PRESS:

- THE ALLEGED DISPUTE BETWEEN THE "GROUP OF NINE" AND
THE RMN DOES NOT EXIST.
- THE MAJORITY OF RMN OFFICERS HAD PREFERRED A RC
NOMINEE FROM THE NORTHERN REGION, BUT COL GARCIA DOS
SANTOS OBTAINED THE WIDEST CONSENSUS IN THE ARMY CHIEF'S
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CONSULTATIONS (REF B).

- CONTRARY TO PRESS SPECULATION ANTUNES'S RELATIONS WITH
PIRES VELOSO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY GOOD.

4. OPORTO BOMBING CASE: FORMAL HEARINGS BEGAN AUGUST
26 FOR THOSE ARRESTED IN THE OPORTO TERRORIST BOMBING
CASE (REF C). IN RECENT DAYS, ONE SUSPECT (LUIS MAXIMO
VIERA) WAS RELEASED AND ANOTHER (ANTONIO JOSE BRITODE

SILVA SANTOS) WAS ARRESTED. SIXTEEN SUSPECTS ARE CURRENTLY BEING DETAINED.

5. COMMENT: THE ARMY STAFF STATEMENT AND SOUSA E CASTRO'S APOLOGETIC RESPONSE SUPPLY THE NECESSARY ASSURANCES TO THE RMN. MELO ANTUNES'S CALL UPON PIRES VELOSO IS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL OF ARMY UNITY. DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE MILITARY WILL NOT GO AWAY. BUT, THE FACT THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AGREED ON THIS SHOW OF MILITARY UNITY DEMONSTRATES THAT COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE SENSITIVE TO THE WIDELY CIRCULATING CRITICISM THAT THEIR SQUABBLING IS DETRIMENTAL TO POLITICAL STABILITY IN PORTUGAL.
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